

Cultural Studies
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Module No. # 02

Key Concepts

Lecture No. # 07

Power

Hello, welcome back to the lectures on various aspects of cultural studies. As you know, these lectures are being recorded under the aegis of NPTEL or National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning, which is a joint venture by the Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian institute of Science, Bangalore, India.

We are in module two of these lectures and we, today we shall be talking about another key concept in cultural studies, that is, power. This is lecture seven in the second module, entitled key concepts.

As always, let us do a recap of what we did in the last lecture. You will recall that the last two lectures were devoted to a very important term in cultural studies, in contemporary cultural studies, namely, representation. We devoted two lectures to the term and we tried to see the various ways in which a few practitioners, critics and theorists of cultural studies have, the way in which they have deliberated upon the term representation, the different shades of meaning they gave to or they have given to the term representation.


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Chris Barker: *Sage Dictionary*

A set of processes by which signifying practices appear to stand for or depict another object or practice in the 'real' world. Representation is thus an act of symbolism that mirrors an independent object world.

However, for cultural studies representation does not simply reflect in symbolic form 'things' that exist in an independent object world, rather, representations are constitutive of the meaning of that which they purport to stand in for.

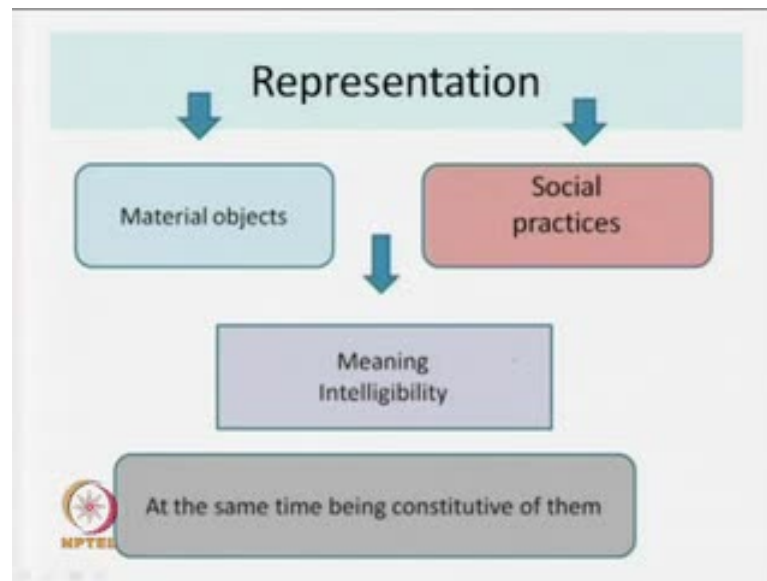
That is, representation does not involve correspondence between signs and objects but creates the 'representational effect' of realism.



So, a quick look at what we discussed in the last two lectures. We looked at the definition or we looked at the unpacking of the term representation as given by Chris Barker in the sage dictionary of cultural studies. And we saw that Barker first talks about representation as a set of processes by which signifying practices appear to stand for another object or practice in the real world and we said that or rather we notice that he..., This is just according to Barker one of the ways of looking at representation.

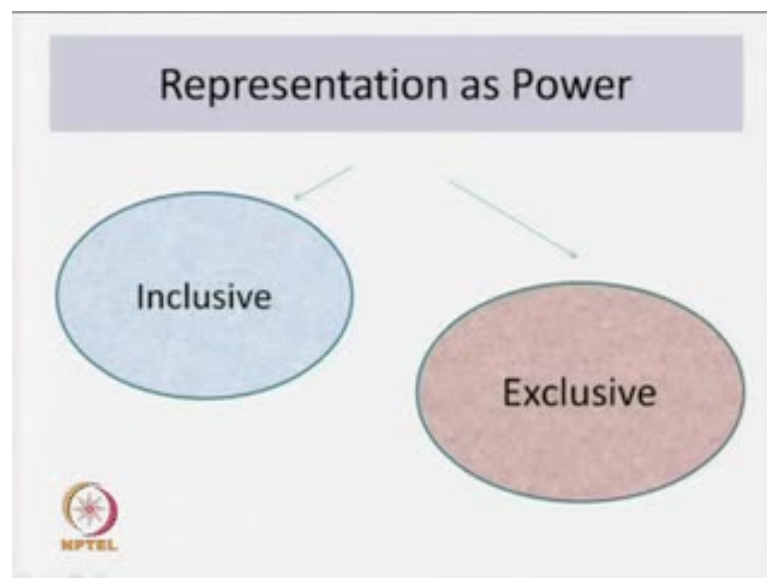
And the more important way in which we look at representation and cultural studies is, is here in the second paragraph. However, for cultural studies, representation does not simply reflect and we had on several locations said that this, this faithful rendering or representing of the world is a problematic area in, you know is considered the problematic area in cultural studies and in studies of representation in particular.

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We also saw that representation is about both, material objects and social practices. So, we, we, we saw that representation could be about both - tangible things and intangible things, and representation contributes to meaning and intelligibility and at the same time are also constitutive of both, the objects and the meaning.

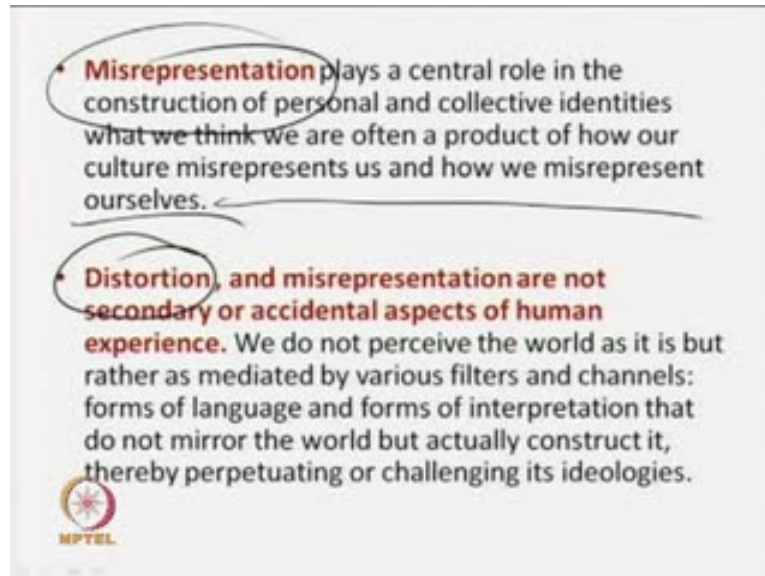
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We then also saw that if, sorry, as representation as power both, includes and excludes meanings. So, we also talked about there being range of meanings or there being, you know, potential meanings that do not, you know so to speak, see the light of day. They

are excluded as far as power is concerned; so, power, which is a topic of today's discussion, is deeply related to representation.

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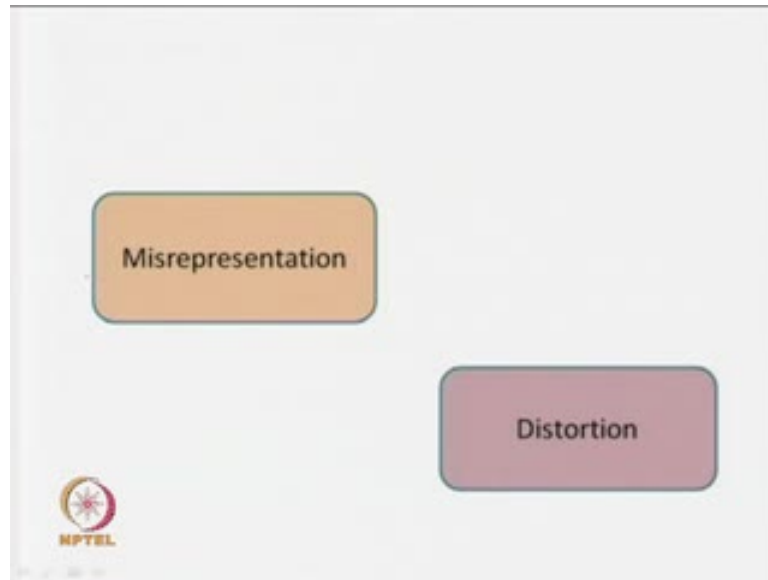


Then, we also saw that Dani Cavallaro uses the term misrepresentation. He says that representation, we may think that misrepresentation is the opposite of representation. However, he says misrepresentation plays a central role in the construction of personal and collective identities, and what we think we are, is often a product of how culture misrepresents us and how we misrepresent ourselves.

The other word that we found given in Dani Cavallaro's book is distortion. And along with distortion, distortion and misrepresentation are, he says not secondary or accidental aspects of human experience and of human representation.

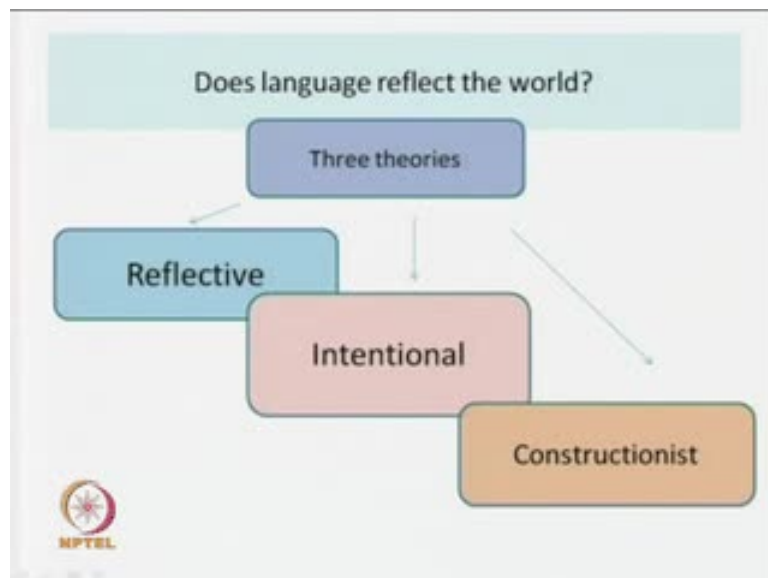
So, we have to keep in mind that even as we understand representation as a process, we sometimes have to admit that most representation can also..., It could be argued that most representation is misrepresentation, even if, only for the very fact that representation can never be total representation, always excludes and includes; representation is by its varying nature and the fact that it is couched in language, by its varying nature, representation is always partial.

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Therefore, misrepresentation and distortion are two terms that we would have to keep in mind.

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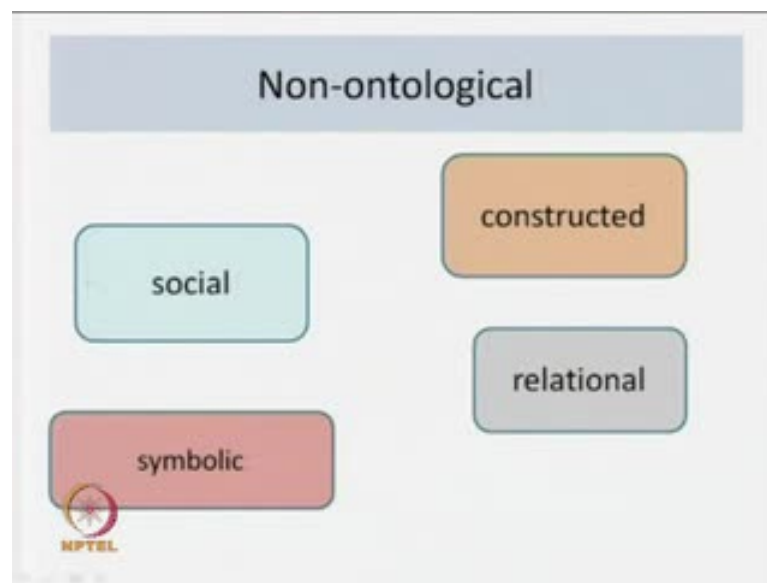


Another important question that came up when we were discussing representation in the last lecture is the question, does language reflect the world? And we saw that there were three theories, which we, which asks us, to us, what all we call the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist theories of this, you know, that are used to answer questions like these - does language reflect the world?

We found that the reflective theory is a mimetic theory or a theory that holds that yes, we can faithfully represent the through language, we can represent any phenomenon whether natural or cultural. In the case of the intentional school of thought, we found that more you know, the meaning resides not in the object or even per say, meaning represent in the intention of the author, meaning represents in what the author wills or intends to tell us, since it is always given by you know, mean, a message or meaning is given to us by, or a representation is given to us by, a certain agent, for instance in this case, the author.

So, the reflective school, again let me repeat, argues that we can faithfully represent things in a reflectionisc mode by claiming that whatever we are, you know the manner, on method, and also the method in which we are representing any phenomenon, is something that can, that can be said to have represented it completely and faithfully.

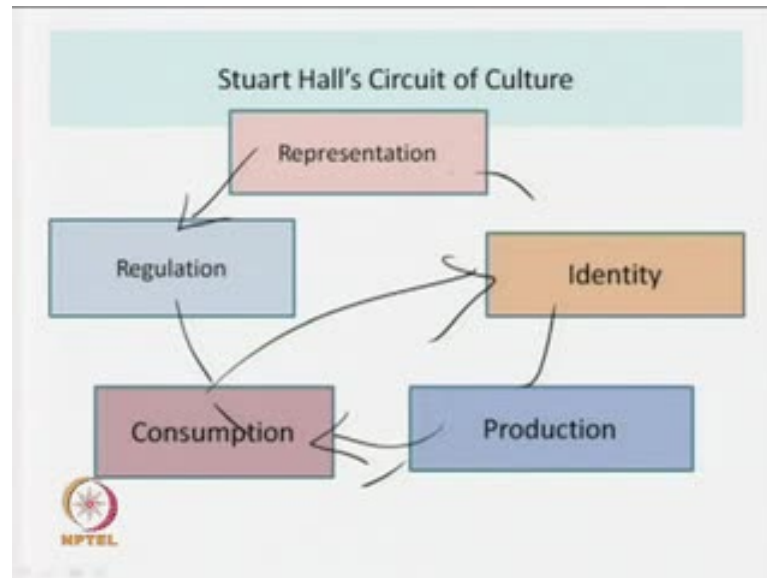
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Finally, we have the constructionist school and if you remember we had, we had said that in the, in the constructionist school of thought of representation argues that all reality, including our social realities, are constructed by human beings and hence are always and by its very nature diverse from or different from the object per say. We also said that we would use, we would then have to use the term onto, non-ontological or non-essential in talking about the constructionist school of thought and the constructionist school of thought is non-ontological, how?

It is non-ontological in having these characteristics that it is social, it is therefore, representation is symbolic, it is constructed and it is relational, that is, it is related to, to other parts or other constituents of a system.

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Then, we also, we, we talked about the circuit of culture as given to us by Stuart Hall and we found that though representation is a very important term in the study of culture and cultural studies. It cannot be studied in isolation and we have to see, see the study of representation and of other key concepts as belonging to what Stuart Hall calls the circuit of culture.

In this case, if we look at the slide, all these terms are deeply related to one another. Representation is related to the regulation of meaning for instance, then the production of meaning through representation is related to the consumption of meaning, the consumption of meaning is related to identity and all these are related to one another; this, therefore is what Stuart Hall calls very importantly, the circuit of culture.

It is important for us to remind ourselves that we, if we theorize, when we theorize in cultural studies we cannot talk about all, you know these, these concepts as discrete entities.

Now, I would like to move into you know, move towards, rather, our topic of discussion today which is power, which as we know is another key concept and as by now most of

you are aware that one of the, you know, one of the key theorists, you know, who come who, who comes to our mind the moment we utter a word like power, particularly within the cultural studies frame work is Michel Foucault. And I would like to you know to, to relate representation and power through Foucault, and through Foucault and this third school of thought of representation is known as constructionism and I shall bring this to you through Stuart Hall.

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The slide features a title 'Foucault and Constructionism (Stuart Hall)' in a light blue header. Below the title is a paragraph of text explaining the constructionist theory of meaning and representation. At the bottom, there are three colored boxes: a light blue box labeled 'Madness', a grey box labeled 'Punishment', and a red box labeled 'sexuality'. A handwritten word 'epistemes' is written across the bottom of the slide, with a line pointing to the 'Punishment' box. The NPTEL logo is visible in the bottom left corner.

Foucault and Constructionism
(Stuart Hall)

This idea that physical things and actions exist, but they only take on meaning and become objects of knowledge within discourse, is at the heart of the constructionist theory of meaning and representation. Foucault argues that since we can only have a knowledge of things if they have a meaning, it is discourse - not the things-in-themselves - which produces knowledge. Subjects like 'madness', 'punishment' and 'sexuality' only exist meaningfully within the discourses about them.

Madness Punishment sexuality

epistemes

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Now, let us first read what Hall has to say about the relation between Foucault and constructionism and representation. This idea that physical things and actions exist, but they take, they only take on meaning and become objects of knowledge within discourse, is at the heart of the constructionist theory of meaning and representation.

Let us look at this again. The idea that things and actions actually exist, but they take on meaning and they become objects of knowledge, objects of knowledge at the things that you can study as the cultural specimen, for instance. They only take on meaning and become objects of knowledge within discourse; this is at the heart of the constructionist theory of meaning and representation. Foucault argues that since we can only have a knowledge of things if they have the meaning, it is discoursed and not the things in themselves, which produces knowledge; this is very important.

This is Foucault repeating what the constructionist school of thought would say, since we can have a knowledge, only have a knowledge of things through what? Through discourse, and essentially what does it mean to say through discourse?

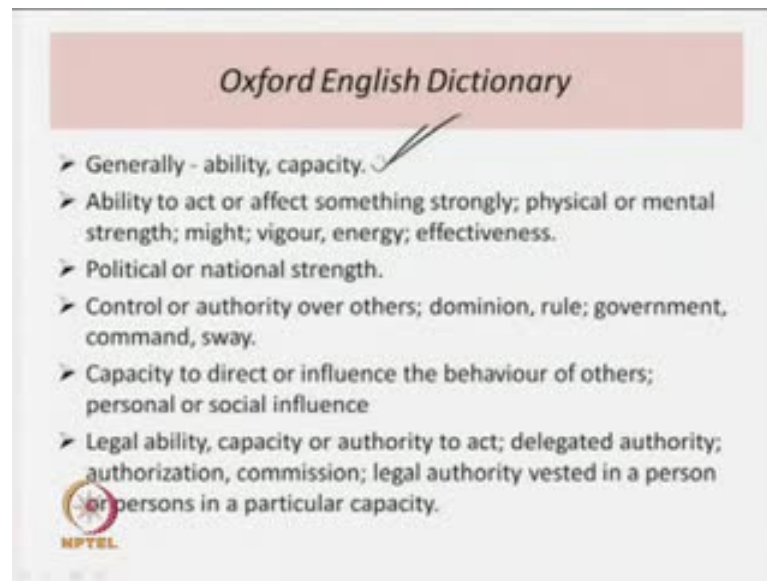
That we have knowledge of something through discourse, it means in the first place that the knowledge of something is you know, is derived through language. Therefore, he argues that we then have, we then have knowledge of something not from what he calls the things in themselves. The things in themselves are you know, only the reflection school of thought would say, that meaning resides, meaning resides in the object and not in language or not in social construction, but as the constructionist Foucault would argue like this.

The things in themselves do not produce knowledge. What produces knowledge? Knowledge is produced by the fact that it is represented to us through discourse. Further, subjects like madness, punishment and sexuality only exist meaningfully within the discourses about them.

Let us look at this again. Madness, sexuality, punishment etcetera, these are again key, you know, key areas of study in, in you know, Foucault's over and he says that these, you know, subjects that if you study madness, if you study punishment, if you study sexuality, these subjects will exist, you know, the meaningfully only within a certain discourse, the discourse that represents it and these further, these discourses will also vary from time to time. These discourses will have, what Foucault would call their own epistemes, or their own knowledge units in different, in different ways in different periods of time.

So, we will move into power, but before that we need to, to understand that Foucault is also, in this, in, in this sense, he appeals to the constructionist school of thought as far as representation is concerned. We will first look at what we call the commonsensical meaning of, you know, the term power or, or, or the dictionary meaning of the term power.

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Now, let us look at this slide there are various ways in which power is defined and the Oxford English Dictionary gives us some of these meanings.

First, power may be considered generally an ability or capacity. In that, you have the ability, you have the power to do something; you have ability to do something, you have the capacity to do something - something that is in you and you will be able to do within the sense that we say that I have the power to do, complete this particular job.

Secondly, power is the, please look at the slide, ability to act or effect something strongly. So power is not, not in just, you know the meaning of power is not simply in the general sense of the capacity to do something; it is also the ability to act or fix something strongly.

Physical or mental strength might mean, please look at the slide, physical or mental strength might vigour energy effectiveness; or number three, power could also refer to the political power of a nation or the national strength.

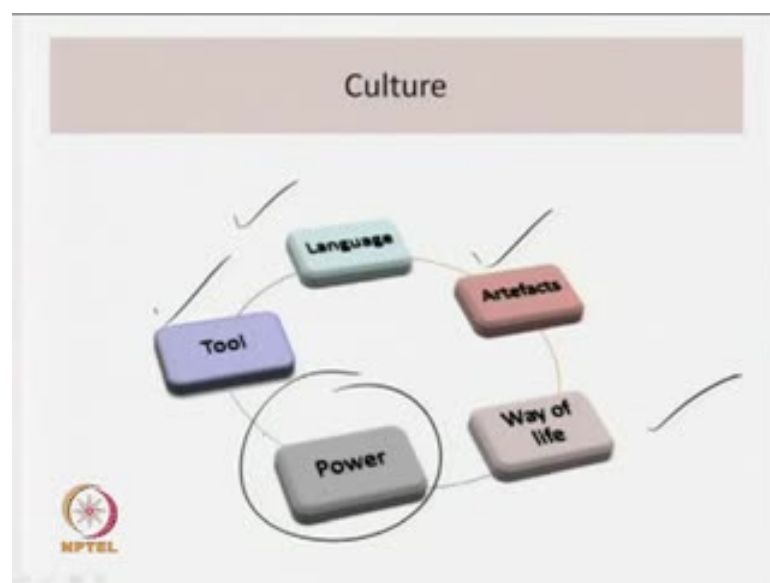
If we say that a country x is a powerful nation, in that sense, power refers to political strength or the strength of a nation, the economic strength of the nation or military strength of the nation, etcetera.

Number four, power is also the control or authority over us. If we say that he or she has the power to, he or she has the power to take this action, to carry out this action or he or she has the power to, to decide you know, decide the certain things. So, in that sense is, is the point number four talks about that you know that, that sense of the meaning of the term power; so control or authority over others, dominion, rule, government, command or way sense of having power over a certain territory.

Next, power is also understood as the capacity to direct or influence the behaviour of others - personal or social influence. And last but not the least; power is legal ability, the capacity or authority to act. Power is delegated authority, particular authorities are, you now, they are you know, they delegate certain powers; for instance, a head of an institution has certain powers delegated to him or her, the head of a nation has certain powers delegated to him or her. In that sense, power is a legal ability, capacity or authority to act - delegated authority, authorization, commission, legal authority vested in a person or persons in a particular capacity.

Now, when we look at all these you know the various ways in which the Oxford English Dictionary articulates the meaning, various meanings of power, we will now look at how power is, is further defined and understood and articulated within the cultural studies framework.

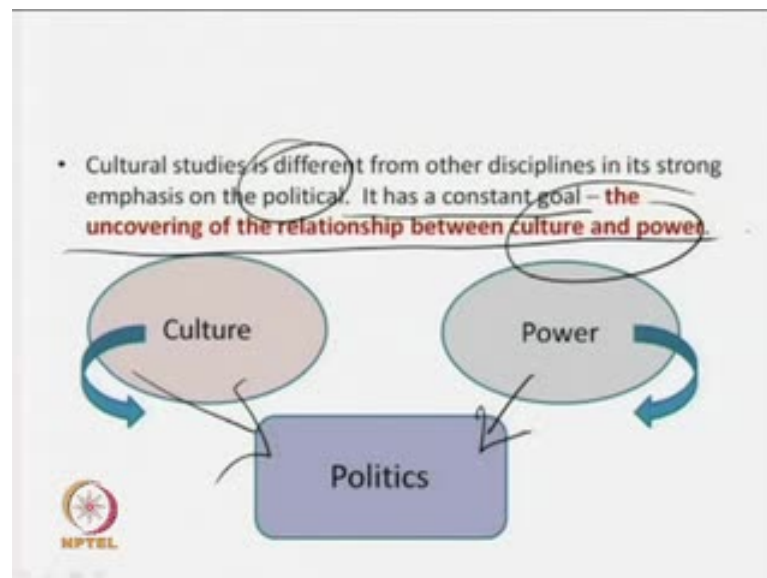
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If you look at this slide, this is something that we had I think, talked about if not the first, at least in the second lecture and we had said that culture, when we talk, when we use the word culture, we use it in a way, you know.

The scope of culture entails the following: culture is the language, culture refers to artifacts, tools. Culture is importantly a way of life and in that if you remember, we had included power. So, the recognition of power as the key concept and an important component of cultural studies was, you know, was discussed by us way back in, you know module one, in either the first or second lecture. This is just to show, you know, to reiterate the fact that power is an important component of culture.

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Now, let us, let us read this. Cultural studies is different from other disciplines in its strong emphasis in the political; this also was a point that we had recognized early on in this, in this series of lectures, and we, we said that why, you know why do cultural studies?

For instance, we have, we have the, you know, the anthropological way of looking at culture, the anthropological way of studying culture and remember Barker's book, you know, on cultural studies which I said we could use as a text book, quite clearly moves away from what is called by some the old emphasis on doing cultural studies, the old

way of doing cultural studies in the sense, as he does not look at culture simply as a way of life.

Or for instance why, why have a, have an area of study known as cultural studies if the linguistic, once we, if it is a fact that the linguistic turned itself is enough for us to, to understand, the things are always represented in discourse through discourse, through language.

So, on the one hand you have anthropology, on the other hand you have the linguistic turn in linguistics, so why have cultural studies? If we were to really zoom in on that element in cultural studies, which makes it different from the way we do - we study culture in anthropology or the way we look at representation in you know, in, in, in the humanities after the linguistic turn - then we would have to zoom in on this element.

Please look at the slide again. Cultural studies is different from other disciplines in its strong emphasis on the political. This is the clear way of saying that the study of power is an integral part; it is an indispensable part of cultural studies.

It has, further, it has a constant goal and that is even, even when you do, sort of do, cultural studies in various ways, you are not to lose sight of a goal which he says is the constant goal; it has the constant goal and what is the goal of cultural studies that we ought not to forget?


The goal is this and please look here, the uncovering of the relationship between culture and power. So, culture and power, this is what gives rise to politics, you know in obviously, they in way, they put in this in a, in a simple way, but the nexus so to speak, the nexus so to speak, between culture and power is something that we are not to lose sight of.

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The slide features a title 'Representation and Power' in a pink header. Below it are two bullet points. The first bullet point is underlined and attributed to Larry Gross. The second bullet point is also underlined and attributed to Stuart Hall. At the bottom left is the NPTEL logo.

Representation and Power

- Representation in the mediated "Reality" of our mass culture is in itself **Power**.
– Larry Gross
- Representation functions ... more like the model of a dialogue.... What sustains this dialogue is the presence of shared cultural codes, which cannot guarantee that meanings will remain stable forever – though attempting to fix meanings is exactly why **power** intervenes in discourse.
– Stuart Hall

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So we will quickly look at two quotations on, on you know, drawing, that draw attention towards the relationship between, you know, the relation between representation and power. The first is by Larry Gross and this is, this is what he has to say, representation in the mediated reality of our mass culture is in itself power. So, in this, what is happening here in this quotation, we are not simply you know, we are not simply connecting representation with power

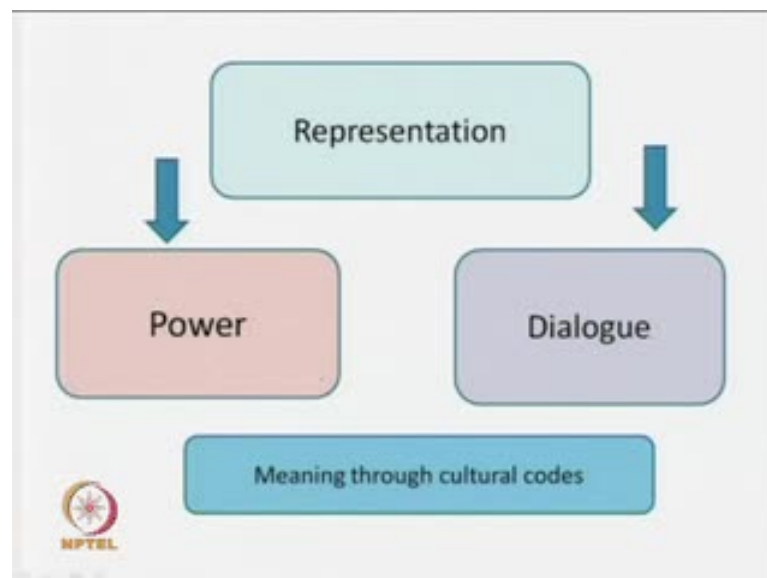
We are, in fact, saying through Larry Gross that representation in itself is culture, sorry, power and is to be considered as power. Look at this again, representation as long as we understand, reality to be mediated particularly in mass culture is in itself power. So, representation equals power.

Second, by Stuart Hall, representation functions more like the model of a dialogue. What sustains this dialogue is the presence of shared cultural codes, which cannot guarantee that meanings will remain stable forever - though attempting to fix meanings is exactly why power intervenes in discourse. So, let us break it up; representation functions like a dialogue and this dialogue is possible because of the presence of shared cultural codes, right, so far so good.

However, this cannot guarantee that meanings will remain stable forever. That is the one we had, I think, talked about this in the last lecture on the..., or in the lecture before this

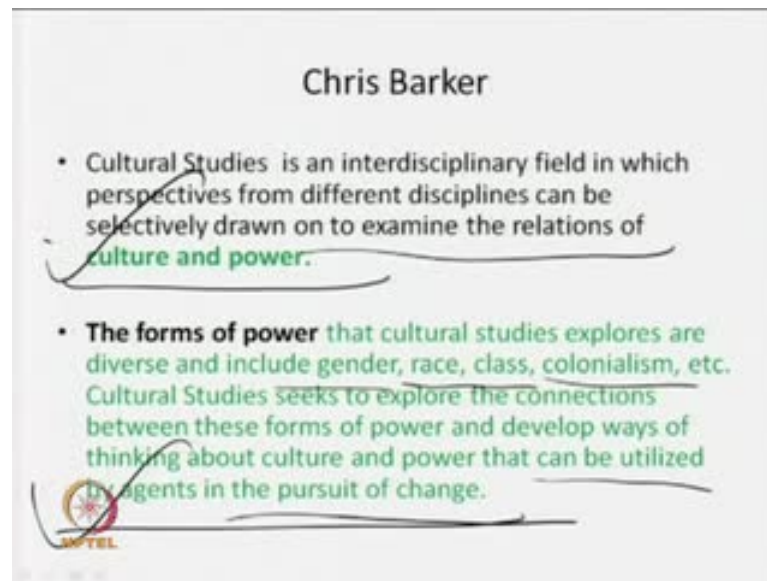
where we have said that culture is all about shared cultural codes, but one important fact that we need to remember is that cultural codes may be shared by a certain community or a certain culture, but across cultures this is always a problem of decoding the cultural codes because the encoding is done within, within a particular culture. In that sense, we, what we find here is that even if we have shared cultural codes when that cannot, that cannot also guarantee that meanings will remain stable forever and what is, what is this force, or what is this force that tries to stabilize meaning? The force, the cultural force that tries to stabilize meaning is called power by Stuart Hall. Power intervenes in the discourse and seeks to stabilize meaning.

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Therefore, if we look at it graphically, representation is all, is related to power; representation is done through dialogue and it is about meaning or the, the, the achieving of meaning, so to speak, the or the production and the consumption of meaning to cultural codes or shared cultural codes.

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Further, we look at some of the formulations by Chris Barker. Now, let us look at this - cultural studies is an interdisciplinary field in which perspectives from different disciplines can be selectively drawn on to examine the relations of culture and power. Here again, Barker, Barker is articulating the main goal of cultural studies.

So, the interdisciplinary..., remember we talked about the shared interdisciplinary scope of cultural studies in our first lecture and that some, you know, by its very nature of being interdisciplinary we would have to select, we would have to select certain discourses or certain formulations from, from sociology, from philosophy, from language, you know from even consciousness studies, etcetera.

And why are we bringing, bringing all of these together? In our bit to understand or (()) examine as this, to examine the relations of culture and power.

Second he says, the forms of power that cultural studies explores, the power has to come in certain forms. Power is, you know maybe could it say, may be may be, you know, ever present or you know, omnipresent or there everywhere, in every aspect of culture but, but power needs to take on certain forms in order to be effective.

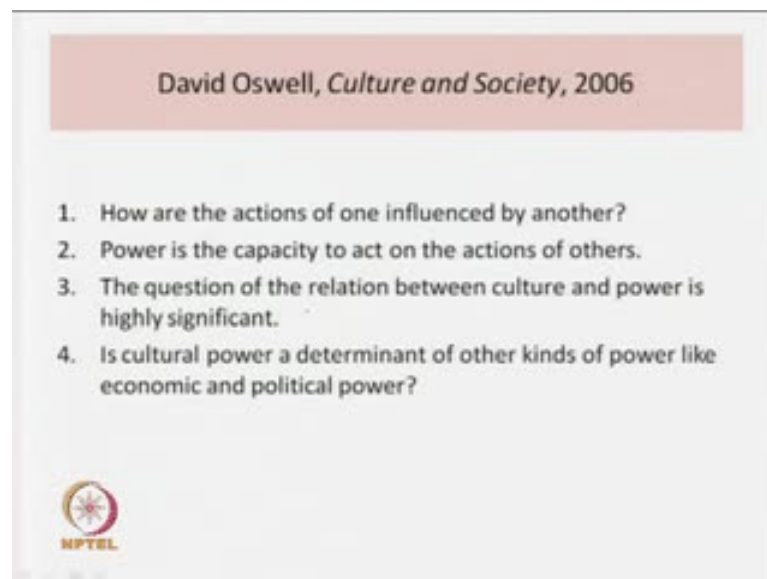
So, let us read again. The forms of power that cultural studies explores are diverse and include, what are these forms of power? Gender, race, class, colonialism, etcetera, these

are the forms of power or these are both, the forms of power and, and the frameworks to which power operates.

Cultural studies seeks to explore the connections between these forms of power and develop ways of thinking about power and culture that can be utilized by agents in the pursuit of change. So our first, our first job is to, to, to draw on interdisciplinary areas and to examine the relations of culture and power. Do we leave it only at that? No.

Why are we doing this exercise in the first place? Why are we looking at different forms of power, like colonialism, like gender, like race etcetera, trying to also understand the interrelations among these, these different forms of, of culture? How they help each other? How they further power the need to do this is a political one, and it is this. Well, let us look at this again, that can be utilized by agents in the pursuit of change; the pursuit of change is again a corner stone of cultural studies.

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Let us also look at how another critic, David Oswell in his book culture and society, let us look at the questions he raises about power, let us look at some of the formulations he gives us on power.

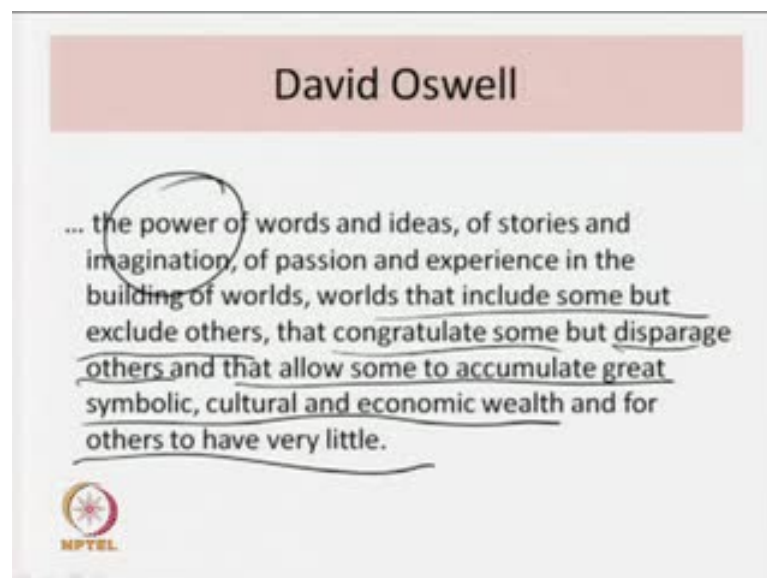
For instance, question number one, how are the actions of one influenced by another? How are the actions, are the actions that we perform? How are our actions influenced by others and how do we influence others by our actions?

Point number two, power is the capacity to act on the actions of ours, others, sorry. He defines power as our capacity; remember one of the definitions of power was as capacity as ability, the first definition given by the Oxford English Dictionary. In general sense, almost a generic definition of power as ability and capacity. So, he, David Oswell furthers this by saying that power is the capacity to do what? The capacity, the capacity to act on the actions of others.

He also, point number three, he also, let us look at this slide here, he also, he also agrees with other critics by saying that the question of the relation between power and culture is highly significant. And he also raises another question, is cultural power a determinant of other kinds of power like economic and political power? Remember the Oxford English Dictionary also talks about political power or national strength, the power of the nation which is usually understood in terms, in military terms or in economic terms.

But he says, could be also talk about cultural power being the determinant of other kinds of power like economic and political power. So, we see, that you know different critics, a, have agreed on this point that the negotiation or the relation between culture and power is something that is central to cultural studies and needs to be investigated.

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Oswell for this says, the power of words and ideas, of stories and imagination, of passion and experience in the building of worlds, worlds that include some, but exclude others,

others. Now, this resonates with so many other critics; it resonates with what Stuart Hall, you know some of the quotations we saw from Stuart Hall, some of the formulations we found from Chris Barker, from Dani Cavallaro. So, this is just to show you that most of the critics agree on points like this.


Worlds, look at this please, worlds that includes some, but exclude others, that congratulate some, but disparage others and that allow some to accumulate great symbolic cultural and economic wealth and for others to have very little. Now, this is, this happens as they would argue, as these theories would argue through the agency of power.

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Marxism

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped as ideas; hence of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance.

ideas = power

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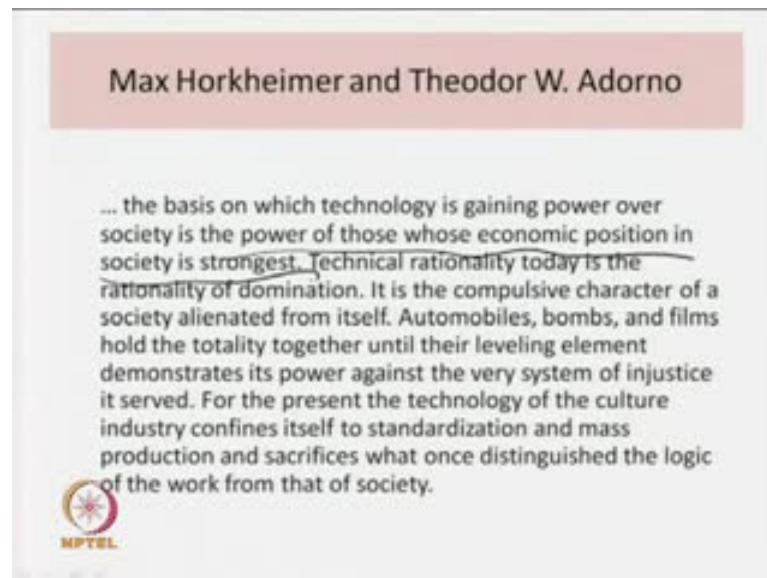
We also, again quickly let us go, you know, you know recall some of things we talked about in Marxism and this quotation - the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, that is, the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time it is ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently - this is what is important for us from the point of view of power of cultural power - consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it.

Now, this on the whole subject to it, say, you know simply means that it is the power of the mental ideas of the ruling class, are those that are usually imbibed by those who lack here, who lack the means of mental production.

Further, the ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped as ideas; hence, of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance.

What is happening here is, this is the clear articulation of how ideas can give power to a certain class within the, you know if you articulate it, within the Marxist frame work; ideas are in this sense also power.

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Now, we look at Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno on the way they talked about power through, through technological rationality and we again read from them - the basis on which technology is gaining power over society is the power of those whose economic position in society is strongest.

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Marxism

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ideas = power




In, just before this, in the quotation from Karl Marx from Marxism, we, we talked about ideas, just go back to this, we talked about ideas equaling power; we talked about the ruling, ruling ideas are always the ideas of the ruling class.

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Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno

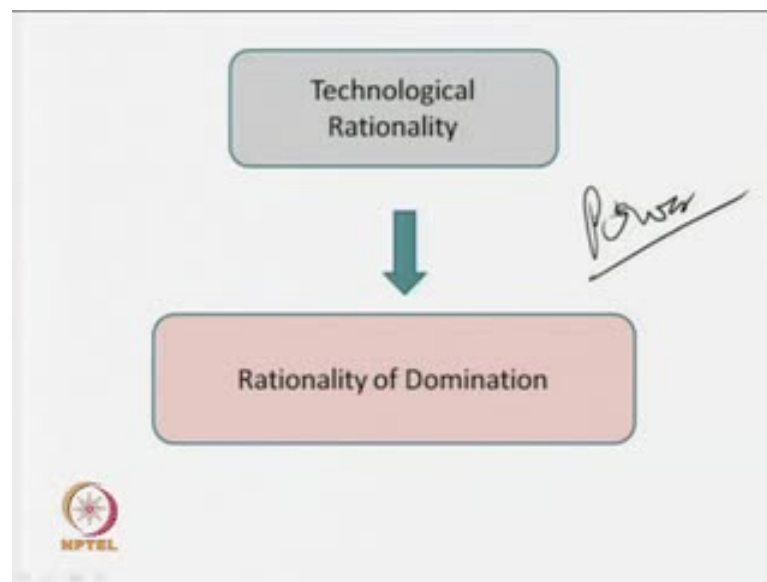
... the basis on which technology is gaining power over society is the power of those whose economic position in society is strongest. Technical rationality today is the rationality of domination. It is the compulsive character of a society alienated from itself. Automobiles, bombs, and films hold the totality together until their leveling element demonstrates its power against the very system of injustice it served. For the present the technology of the culture industry confines itself to standardization and mass production and sacrifices what once distinguished the logic of the work from that of society.



The same way here, Horkheimer and Adorno relate technology, relate technology to power and to the power of those whose economic position is strongest. Let us read this again. The basis on which the technology is gaining power of a society is the power of those whose economic position in society is strongest.

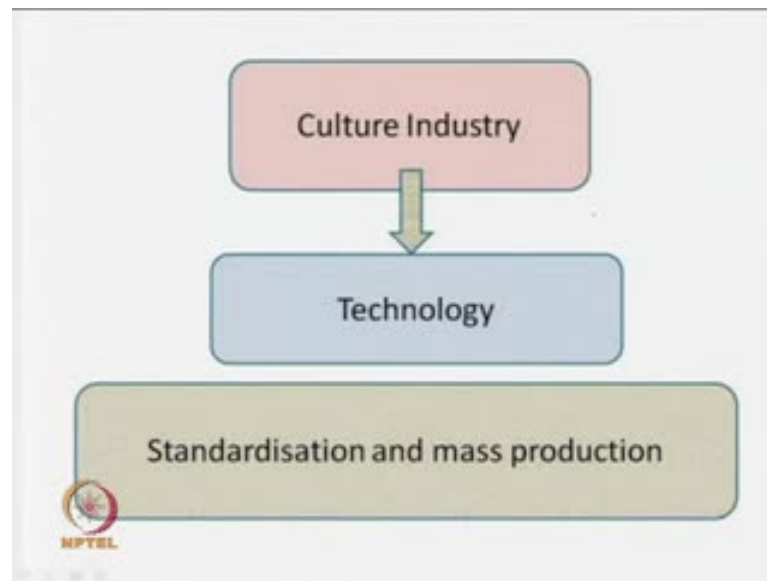
Technical rationality today is the rationality of domination. The important point here to relate is the rationality of technology is today the rationality of domination. It is the compulsive, I will quickly finish you know complete this quotation, it is the compulsive character of a society alienated from itself. Automobiles, bombs and films hold the totality together until their leveling element demonstrates its power against the very system of injustice it served. For the present the technology of the culture industry confines itself to standardization and mass production and sacrifices what once distinguished the logic of the work from that of society.

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This, we can you know look at it, from you know, through this representation. Technological rationality is the rationality of domination and hence, technological rationality is something that gives power to the economically strongest class in society.

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The culture industry which is also dependent on technology ensures standard, standardization and mass production, may be just a while ago talked about, when you know looked at quotation from Larry Gross, we talked about representation as he says representation is power.

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Stuart Hall

- Culture is a critical site of social action and intervention, where power relations are both established and potentially unsettled.
- It works primarily by inserting the subordinate class into the key institutions and structures which support the power and social authority of the dominate order. It is, above all, in these structures and relations that a subordinate class lives its subordination.

In the bottom-left corner of the slide, there is a small circular logo with a red and white design and the text 'NPTEL' below it.

As, when we look at mass, you know, consumption and mass production, mass media representation is equal to power. Again, let us look at what Stuart Hall has to say -

culture is a critical site of social action and intervention, where power relations are both established and potentially unsettled.

If we think that it is always a one way, you know, it is a one way matter, then if we think, if we think that power relations are always established that the dominant class always has power, we have, we would be then completely missing out on a ownly part of this own study of power in cultural studies, which is equally important and that is the unsettling for power. We, like Foucault, we have to understand that power is not just disabling, power can also be enabling, power is sort to be established, even as power is sort to be established, power is also potentially unsettled.

So, it again by Stuart Hall - it works primarily by inserting the subordinate class into the key institutions and structures which support the power and social authority of the dominate order.

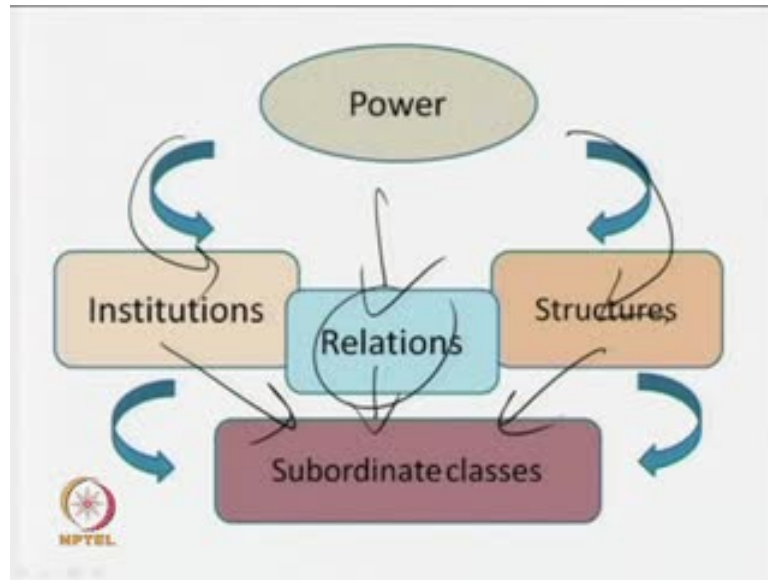
Now, the point is, like we discussed you know just a while ago that we discussed about the forms of power. If you remember when you looked at the articulation by, by I think it was Chris Barker, he said that there are power operates a certain forms and what were those forms? If you recall those forms are forms of gender, forms like gender, race, colonialism, etcetera.

Now, these are the structures and these are the institutions through which power, power operates, through which you know cultural studies recognizes that power operates through certain institutions, which are also the forms that were talked about by, by Barker. It is above, it is above all in these structures and relations, that is subordinate class lives out its subordination.

So, we need certain socio-cultural structures, certain forms and relations for this very subordination to be worked out. In the same way, we have to also remind ourselves that it is also within the framework, within the work, you know, within the, the forms and institutions and practices in which subordination is, is lived out.

From these forms, this very forms, this, this, this second aspect of power comes upon, that is, it is something that is always potentially sort to be unsettled and which is, which is from time to time also being, being achieved; that is the unsettling of power.

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Therefore, if you look at the slide, power works through institutions, power works through institutions, power works through structures to give rise to certain relations among people and these relations, these institutions and structures, they see to it or rather, this is through which power operates and this is through which the subordination of subordinate classes is achieved.

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Michel Foucault

Power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not reconstituted 'above' society as a supplementary structure whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of.

Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations.



We look next at formulations by Michel Foucault - power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not reconstituted above society as a supplementary structure, or, we use

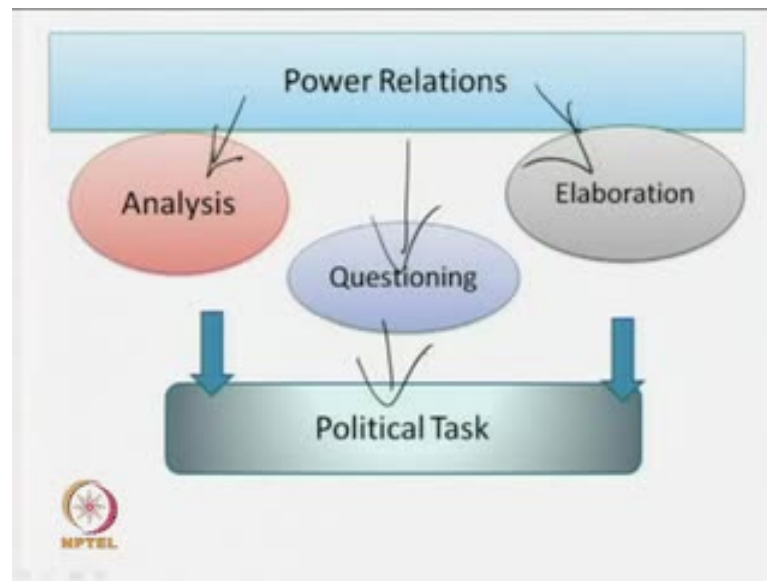
you know prepositions like over to have power, over somebody to, you know, to exercise power on something.

Now, these prepositions may lead us to think that power is something that is always clamped from the outside or something that is always clamped from above. Look at how Foucault articulates it - power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not reconstituted above society as a supplementary structure whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of. Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to, or allows to slip by.

Some of the so called commonsensical definitions of power may lead us to think that power is something, it is an either-or situation - either you have power or you do not. It is, like when somebody holds a certain office, we think that this person has, has power, something that one is clinging on to. The moment, the day he retires or is relieved of his office of that particular office or job or responsibility, we think that power has slipped out; you use words, terms like his power has slipped out of his hands or he has relinquished power. This kind of discourse, this kind of way, you know, of talking about power may mislead us, Foucault says, into thinking that power, as he says here that, that power is something acquired, seized or shared, something that we hold on to or something that we allow to slip away, power is exercised from in, this is very important, from innumerable points.

Power, power operates in innumerable, operates through innumerable nodes - these nodes are different forms, these are different, sorry, these are different structures, these are different institutions in society - in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations. The point from this slide that we need to note is therefore, a, power is not something that is imposed from the outside or you know, that words like or prepositions like over and all may, may lead us into believing.

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Second, power is not a case, not a case that you either have power or you do not have power. Power operates, power operates to, you know in, in a more horizontal sort of a way through what Foucault calls, innumerable points in society and in discourse.

Therefore, power relations are..., you know, What is the job of the cultural theorists? The job of the cultural theorists is the analysis, first to look at power relations and to analyze these power relations.

What are the institutions from which these power relations are emanating? How many of these forms of power are working together to, to be, to be so ubiquitous, to be so totally present, to be so, to be spread so horizontally?

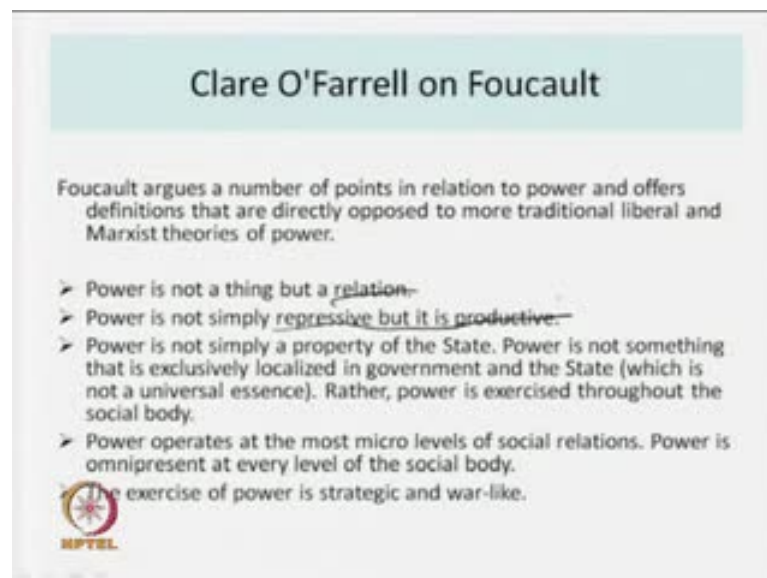
For instance, when you look at these institutions and structures or forms of power for instance, again we can say, we can ask questions like this - the forms of power like gender, race, colonialism and even caste, are they working in tandem in a certain socio-culture scenario? So, such analysis would have to be made by cultural studies.

And secondly, this elaboration, we also need to elaborate how these power relations are taking place? After you know, how, you know, you need to further describe these and work out the analysis.

Hence, there has to be a questioning, there has to be a questioning of the order in our bit to understand the working of power, in our bit to understand that power is not clamped from the outside, that power is part and parcel of the very lives that we lead. This is the political task inherent in doing cultural studies.

So, when, when you study cultural studies you are not really studying it as a subject, you know that you take for an exam or you know to study to write an exam or you know to get a degree. Some amount of commitment, political commitment is expected when you are a serious scholar of cultural studies.


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Clare O'Farrell on Foucault

Foucault argues a number of points in relation to power and offers definitions that are directly opposed to more traditional liberal and Marxist theories of power.

- Power is not a thing but a relation.
- Power is not simply repressive but it is productive.
- Power is not simply a property of the State. Power is not something that is exclusively localized in government and the State (which is not a universal essence). Rather, power is exercised throughout the social body.
- Power operates at the most micro levels of social relations. Power is omnipresent at every level of the social body.
- The exercise of power is strategic and war-like.



Now, I will look at what Clare O'Farrell has to, you know, the way an exposition on Foucault has been done. Farrell says, O'Farrell says that Foucault argues the number of points in relation to power and offers definitions that are directly opposed to more traditional liberal and Marxist theory of power; this is an important point.

If we looked at formulations given by, by Marxism or may be other, other will liberal schools of sort, on how ideas, how ruling ideas for instance, are the ideas of the ruling class, and they are tied so much to idea to, to, to economics and to ideology, to the base, to the modes of production, then what is the need to talk about power a little differently? So, why do we need to listen to what Foucault has to say? Clare O'Farrell says here that

in the Foucauldian, you know, Foucauldian discourse on power, there are certain points that we have to, to remember very carefully.

Now, please look at the slide a. Power is not a thing, but a relation. It is very important, it is, it is not the thing that you look for, you and try and understand, expound on power, you try to look at, you know, the presence of power and the workings of power in terms of relations.

It is not a thing, but a relation. Power is not simply repressive, but it is productive. We, all this while you know, being more or less talking about power being repressive, power is also productive. And this way, productivity of power is again through for testimony to the fact, that power is so ubiquitous and power is found everywhere. Power, next, is not simply a property of state, power is not something that is exclusively localized in government and the state, rather, power is exercised through the social body.

This again brings to us to, to, to this point that we had, we had discussed, the power is not something clamped from outside. Next, power operates at the most micro levels of social relations and power is omnipresent at every, every level of the social body, not just the economic or not just the commercial.

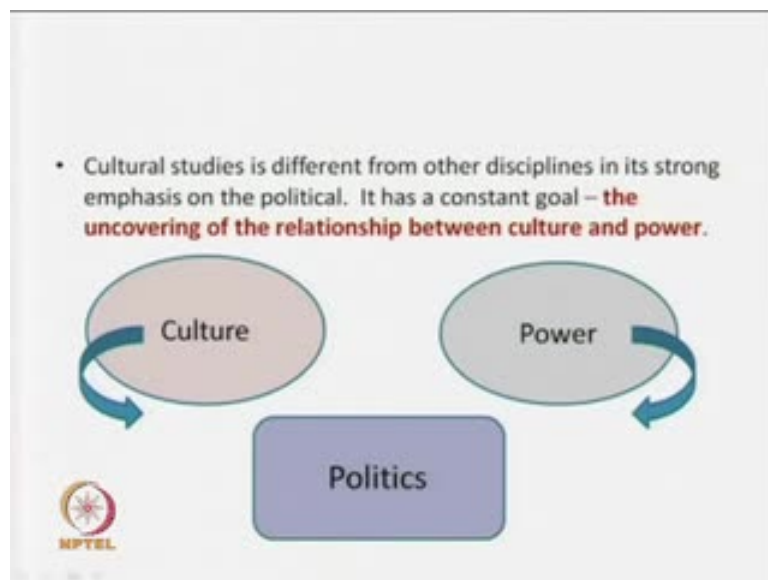
The exercise of power is strategic and war like that this power has, you know, institutions, forms and structures, have certain strategies to which they see to; with that power is always present.

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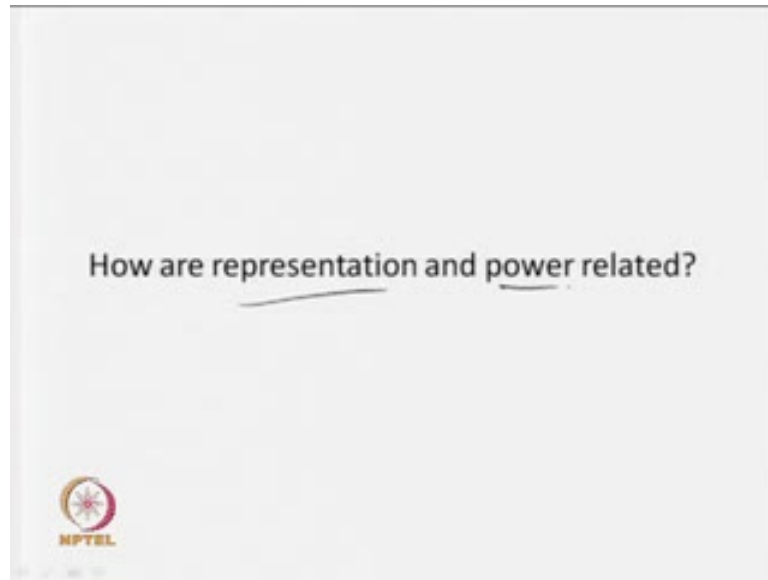
So, let us move on to the discussion and we will take just a few questions because we do not have much time here. For instance, let us look at a question, like why is power an important concept in cultural studies?

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The answer is culture and power are both tied to politics; there is, in a way, politics only because power is such a part of culture. And cultural studies is different from other disciplines and in its strong emphasis on the uncovering of the relationship between culture and power.

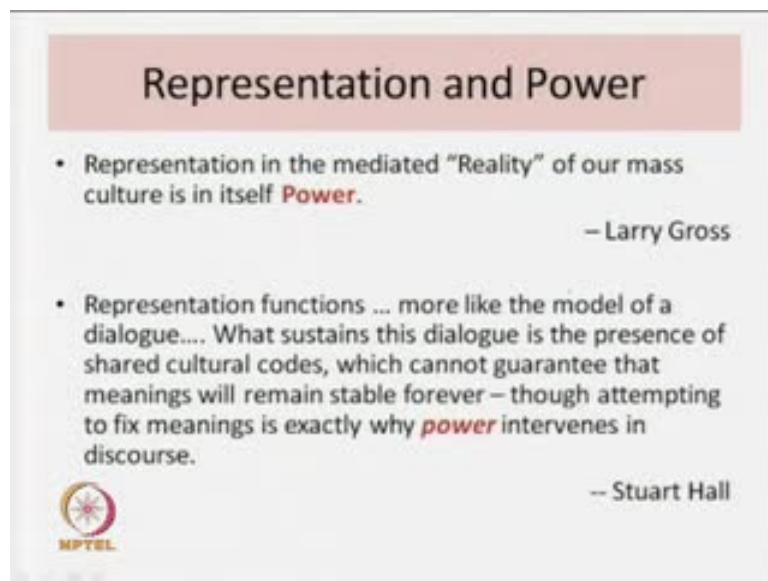
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You know, its constant goal is to show how culture and power are related and how power operates in culture and in society and that is why, it is so important as a part of culture studies.

Second, how are representation and power related?

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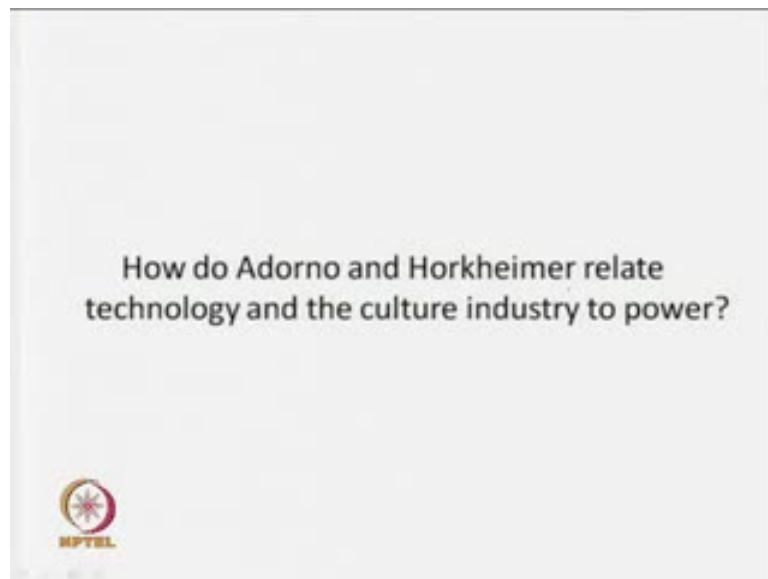
Both being very important concepts in cultural studies, the answer is this, in, in in the sense, as Larry Gross articulate said, representation is power. In the reality, the mediated

reality of mass culture, representation becomes power. This, the power of certain ideas to hold, certain images to hold our imagination for a very long time and even, so to speak, to determine our ways of living our, our values, our conducts even.

And secondly, in the way articulated by Stuart Hall representation functions, more like the model of a dialogue, which sustains and what sustains this dialogue is the presence of shared cultural codes and through attempting, you know, though we attempt to fix meanings, is exactly why, power intervenes in discourses.

So, representation is seen by Hall through the model of a discourse and power intervenes in discourse and that is, this is another way in which power and representation are related.


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Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno

... the basis on which technology is gaining power over society is the power of those whose economic position in society is strongest. Technical rationality today is the rationality of domination. It is the compulsive character of a society alienated from itself. Automobiles, bombs, and films hold the totality together until their leveling element demonstrates its power against the very system of injustice it served. For the present the technology of the culture industry confines itself to standardization and mass production and sacrifices what once distinguished the logic of the work from that of society.

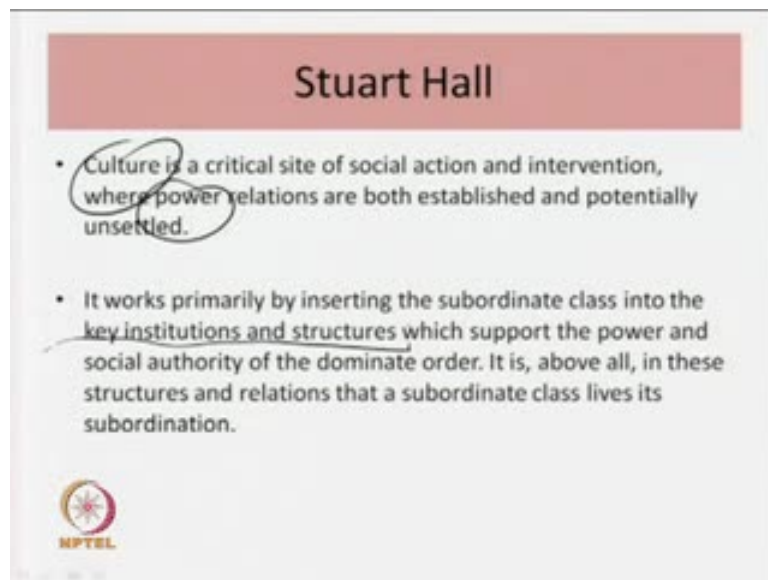


The next question is, how do Adorno and Horkheimer relate technology and the culture industry to power? We, we had looked at this and how would you answer this? You would say that according to Horkheimer and Adorno, the basis on which technology is gaining power over society is the power of those whose economic position in society is the strongest. But you would focus more on this technical rationality. Today is the rationality of domination, the rationality of, of, you know, of that is offered to us by technology, the representation of the world to technology is actually which is seen as rationality; actually, your rationality of power and the rationality of domination.

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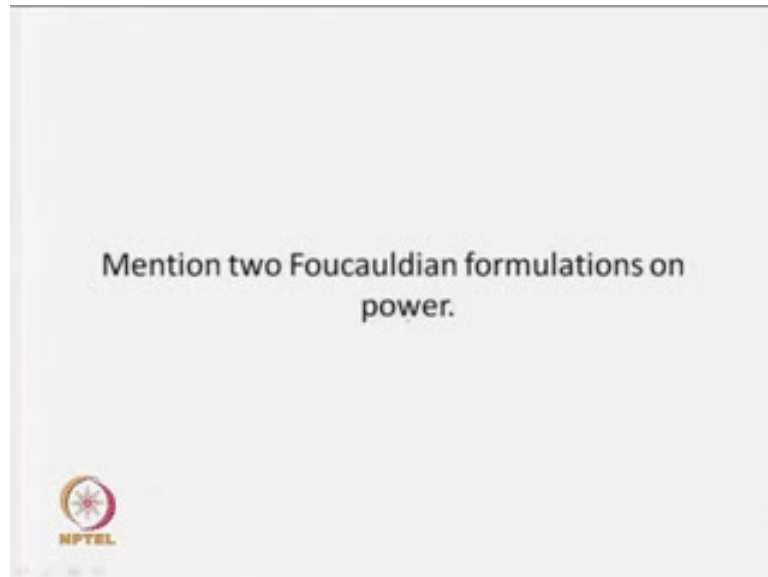


How does or show how Stuart Hall relates power to culture? Stuart Hall says that culture a, culture is a critical site where power relations are both established and potentially unsettled. Therefore, if power has to work, it needs a site and that site is culture; that is how he relates culture and power.

Second, power works primarily by inserting the subordinate class into key institutions and structures. Now, these key institutions and structures are what culture is comprised of. So, for power to work, power has to work primarily, you know, if power has to

subordinate, if you look at the subordinating, subordinating the dominating aspect of power, then we have to understand through Stuart Hall that power needs certain, as I have said in so many times in this lecture, power needs certain forms, power needs certain institutions and power needs certain structures for it to be able to dominate and to subordinate; and these institutions and powers are what we call culture.

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Mention two Foucauldian, this is a final question, mention two Foucauldian formulations of power, you know, on power and this is one, we shall two of the many formulations or what we are going to look at.

Power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus not reconstituted above society. So, power is not, you know, supplementary structure, power is not, you know, something that is clamped from above or something that is outside of the very site on which it operates.

Second, second formulation is power is not something that you acquire or hold on to or something that you seize, like we always had these ways of talking about power, like power will seize from the government, there was a military coup or there was an annexation and power seize. We have, we are use to this sort of talking, these ways of talking about power, but Foucault says that power is not something in cultural studies.

When you look at culture and power, power is not something that you acquire. Now, something that was never with you, so power is something that is always been with you, even if you been part of the subordinate class, why? Because there is always the potential and in this sense, another meaning of the word power is also the potential power in you to unsettle the established order.

So, power is not something that is acquired, seized or shared, something that one holds to or allows to slip away. Power is exercised from innumerable points in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations. So power, there are many nodes, power in the sense, innumerable points in the whole fabric of our culture and society through which power operates.

When by consider what we have talked about today as far as power is concerned, like so many, like in the case of so many, so many other concepts that we have talked about, I am also this time left with the feeling that we barely scratch the surface of this very important term.

There are, I said, so many even from Foucault point for instance, we have, you know his concept of bio-power, his concepts of dispositive or the operators of power. We have the idea of these concepts of govern mentality. There are many ways and those of you are

interested to look at this part or to look at the formulations of power as given to us, particularly by Michel Foucault, would go on to read his works like power, knowledge, the history of sexuality, to look at this works like discipline and punish, for instance to see.

There is also the idea of the pan optical so you could, you could very well go on and look, you know, for you look at those titles. As far as this lecture was concerned, my, you know, my attempt was to bring to you certain, to show you certain ways in which the dictionary, you know the dictionary definitions of power are not, you know not, do not suffice when we look at power from cultural studies points of view. And I have tried to bring in a few critics and there, you know, formulations on power and as always it is just the unpacking has just began.

We will stop here today and we have, we have just couple of lectures in, you know, in this module and gender for instance, and then after that we shall be moving on to another module, which is entitled, the sites of cultural studies.

Thank you